

That is just one example. I say, Mr. President, and others, if you want fast-track authority? Then straighten out the trade problems that now exist. Yes, straighten out the problems with Canada and Mexico and Japan and others and I will be the first to line up and say let's talk about new trade authority. But until we solve the vexing and difficult problems of trade agreements that have now resulted in the largest trade deficit in the history of this country, we ought not be moving towards fast-track trade authority.

Before I finish that subject, let me put in a word about Charlene Barshefsky, our new Trade Ambassador. I like Charlene Barshefsky. She has some spunk and she has some life. She is out there, trying to say to our trading partners that we expect reciprocal trading policies. If we open our market to your goods you have a responsibility to open your market to ours. She has been in Canada, telling the Canadians what you are doing with Canadian grain is wrong and it abrogates the treaty.

In fact—just one more point about the Canadian grain—when the United States-Canada Free-Trade Agreement passed the House Ways and Means Committee, and I was on the committee, the vote was 34 to 1. That "1" was me. I said at the time I felt that treaty was going to result in a serious problem for us. And it has.

Clayton Yeutter, the Trade Ambassador at that point, said, "No, no, no. Your concerns about an avalanche of Canadian grain flooding the United States market and undercutting American farmers, that is nonsense. That will not happen."

I'll tell you what he said. Mr. Yeutter said, "I'll tell you what, I will give it to you in writing. I will make the promise in writing." And he wrote it down. He said that his agreement with the Canadians was with the understanding that good faith would be subscribed to by both sides by not dramatically changing the quantity of grain coming across the border. That was his agreement. So he wrote it down. That was good faith. That was his understanding. That is what he negotiated. However, it was not worth the paper it was written on.

The second the ink was dry and the minute the treaty was done, what we saw was an avalanche of grain come south. At the same time you couldn't take a grocery sack full north. It undercut our markets in Durum wheat especially, and cost our farmers massive amounts of lost income.

So, why am I a little sore about some of those things? I am angry because we have negotiated trade agreements that have undercut our producers and we ought not do that. I am for free trade. I am for expanded trade. But I am for fair trade. If it is not fair, than the agreement is not right.

Charlene Barshefsky is a breath of fresh air and she is trying. She can only do what any administration al-

lows her to do. I urge the President and others to understand that in order to have trade negotiating authority of anything resembling fast track, they first must address the serious problems in the previous agreements that have been negotiated. Until that happens, at least a number of us, including Senator SNOWE and I, based on the letter we have sent to the President, do not support the extension of fast track for all the reasons I have mentioned previously.

THE BALANCED BUDGET AGREEMENT

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I would like to talk about one other topic today. It is a subject that is in the paper this morning—the balanced budget agreement.

Mr. President, I do not know all of the details of the agreement. I know the outline and the skeleton of the balanced budget agreement that has been reached through a substantial amount of negotiation. I expect, were I to negotiate a balanced budget agreement, it might be different than that which was negotiated and that which I read about this morning. I have been party to many briefings, including the most substantial briefing yet on what has been negotiated, but I confess, like most Members of the Senate who have not been in the room during all the negotiations, I may not know all the provisions of this agreement.

However, I have said repeatedly during the debates that we have had on a constitutional amendment to balance the budget, and in many other circumstances, that I support balancing the budget. I think there is merit in fiscal discipline. I think we should balance the budget. And I think we should work together to do that.

In 1993 I voted for a deficit reduction act that was a very controversial piece of legislation. And we passed that by one vote. It happened to be the Vice President's vote. My party voted for it, the other party didn't. I am not going to make judgments about that today. I suppose that's the time for a political discussion.

We paid, in my party, a significant price for that vote in 1993, because it was not popular. I said at the time, and I have said repeatedly since, I am glad I voted the way I did. It wasn't easy. It cut some spending. It raised some taxes. It wasn't a very easy vote, but I am glad I voted the way I did because I believe that it was the first significant step in deciding we are going to do the tough thing to reduce the budget deficit.

What happened since that time? We have had year after year of declining budget deficits. The unified deficit has come down, way down—not just down a bit, but way down, by 75 percent. But the job is not yet done. And that is why there have been negotiations between the President and Members of Congress about how to finish the job.

I think we will find that the agreement that has been negotiated will receive fairly substantial support in the Senate and the House. I want to vote to finish the job. I voted to start the job and I want to vote to finish it. I think we ought to tell the American people there is fiscal discipline in this place. There is merit in a balanced budget. And there is no difference in desire on either side of the aisle about wanting to live within our means. That is not a political question between the two parties. I think that is demonstrated by what we did in 1993. I hope it will be demonstrated by what we all do this year.

Now, is part of this agreement smoke? I think so. I mean, I can describe certain areas of it where I think it is a fair amount of smoke, or fog.

But is some of it real? Is it moving us in a bipartisan way in the right direction? I think so. Importantly, it does it the right way. What we have said for a long time is there is a right way to do things and a wrong way to do things. I have said on the floor there is a big difference between deciding to invest in star wars or star schools. I am not saying one is all right and one is all wrong, but I am saying they are very different. Because it suggests one believes education is critically important and the other says no, the priority is over here in defense.

My point is what we have done, I think, in these negotiations is to decide, yes, let us balance the budget, but let us preserve the priorities that are important. Let us as a nation decide that education is still at top of the national agenda and there is not anything much more important in our country than making sure all our kids in this country, every young boy, every young girl, have the opportunity to be everything they can be. And that we will invest in their lives, starting, yes, at Head Start, and going all the way through college. We will invest in their lives, to decide that all of our children should become whatever their talents will allow them to become; whatever hard work and opportunity will allow them to be, as Americans. A major part of that is our decision to make a significant investment and attachment to education as a priority. And this budget agreement does that.

This President said I will not be a part of the budget agreement and I won't sign a budget bill unless it retains the priority of education. And this budget agreement contains room for new investments in education, which is critically important.

The agreement also has room for new investments in health care. It says that 5 million kids, about half of the population of kids without health care, 5 million can be insured. There is room here so we can insure you, provide insurance for health care for 5 million kids.

There is room here to continue to make progress on issues in the environment. The President said, "I won't sign

a bill unless it meets these priorities." And he negotiated and negotiated, and we negotiated, and we have a piece of legislation that is going to balance the budget but does preserve those priorities.

On the environment, just as an aside, I'll bet there is not a person serving in the Congress today who, 20 years ago, would have said this: We can double the use of energy in America in the next 20 years and we will end up with cleaner air and cleaner water. I'll bet there is not one person who would have predicted that, because all the experts predicted we would increase dramatically our use of energy and have dirtier air and dirtier water as a result.

But it did not happen. We doubled our use of energy as a nation, and our air is cleaner and our water is cleaner. Why? Because the Government said those who continue to pollute our air and water are going to be penalized. Congress said it will no longer be business as usual. The environment is important. We are going to insist that those who are polluters in our country are going to stop polluting.

We don't have a perfect situation, but I am saying we are moving in the right direction, we have cleaner air and cleaner water, even as we have doubled the use of energy.

So, what the President was saying is, on education, on health care, on the environment, there are certain things that must be in this legislation. Even as we balance the budget we must make room to invest and continue to make progress in those areas. This piece of legislation does that.

I know there are some who have heartburn because it does it. But I think it is the right impulse, for us to decide what is important for all of us, Republicans and Democrats, to do in this country to advance the interests of America.

One of them is to help to invest in our future by investing in our kids' education.

One of those is to say to those in this country who do not have the opportunity and do not have the resources to have health care coverage, especially for kids, that we want to help get health care coverage. This agreement will provide it for 5 million kids.

And one of those is to say the environment is important. We should not back up or retreat on the environment. What we should do is continue to move forward and make progress to clean up our Earth and clean our water and say to polluters it is not appropriate to pollute this country. Part of the cost of production is to clean up as you produce. Fortunately, that is not so controversial anymore, because we have made so much progress and the American people so value living in a clean environment that now, most all politicians, I think, understand the value of that.

But I wanted to simply come today to say that we have made a lot of progress. In 1993 we took the first

flight of stairs, and I am pleased I made that vote. It was a long flight of stairs. It was a tough vote to make. Now we are climbing the second flight of stairs. I think this is going to be a bipartisan effort and I am pleased that is the case.

No, this bill is probably not perfect. But I would say this. We are moving in the right direction in this country. The fact is, our economy is better than it was. Unemployment is down. Inflation is down. More people are working. We are moving in the right direction, largely because, I think, going from a period when we had Federal deficits of \$300 billion a year, everyone in this country now sees that the President is serious and the Congress is serious about getting our fiscal house in order. That gives people more confidence about the future.

If people, yes, even the market—especially the market, I suppose—if they have confidence about the future and about the fiscal discipline that can come from a President and a Congress working together, we will see them making the investments in the future because they have more confidence in the future. That is what this is all about.

So, I wanted to say, when I got up this morning and read the newspaper, I was pleased to see that we are taking another step toward agreement.

I don't happen to view bipartisanship as something that is bad for this country. I think it is something that is good for this country. There are some, incidentally, who think being bipartisan is inherently bad, because both sides ought to fight like the devil for whatever it is they believe and whatever is the outcome is the outcome.

I do not believe that. That is not the way we did most things in this country. We have an interstate highway that goes from Fargo, ND, to Beach, ND. It was not one group of people out there who said, "Let's have a big fight about an interstate highway." It was a bipartisan approach in the 1950's, to say, "Let's create an interstate highway in this country."

The interesting part about it is I don't suppose, when Dwight Eisenhower, then President, and Sam Rayburn, Speaker of the House, sat down at the White House and reminisced about what they were going to do here, I don't suppose they actually stopped to think how do we justify to the American people the cost of building a 4-lane interstate highway from Beach, ND, to Fargo, ND, where 600,000 people live?

I suppose Citizens Against Government Waste and the National Taxpayers Union, or some other group these days—if someone were to try to do that—would say, "What on Earth are you doing?" How on Earth can you justify that expenditure, going across sparsely populated states?

Of course we now know it was one of the great achievements in the middle of this century, building an interstate

highway system that opened up vistas of commerce and opportunity.

My point is, I think bipartisanship is a wonderful thing. I think there ought to be more opportunities for us to work together. And I hope, if this budget agreement is as we are to understand it to be and is a bipartisan effort, that in the coming weeks, we can demonstrate to the American people we do care about fiscal responsibility, we do want to abolish the Federal budget deficit, and we do want to provide greater hope and opportunity to the American people by doing so.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BENNETT). Without objection, it is so ordered.

FAMILY FRIENDLY WORKPLACE ACT

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I would like to respond to a few points made on the floor this morning concerning the so-called Family Friendly Workplace Act. My colleagues from Georgia and Missouri said this morning that Democrats were filibustering this bill. They complained that working Americans are crying out for flexibility, and that Democrats are arbitrarily standing in the way of progress.

I would like to set the record straight. We began debate on this bill Tuesday morning, May 13, and spent just over 2 hours discussing the legislation. Then the Republican leadership filed a petition to cut off debate. There was no filibuster. There were no Senators on the floor reading from irrelevant materials in an effort to thwart the will of the majority.

We had no more discussion on the bill on Tuesday afternoon, or on Wednesday the 14th. Yesterday morning, May 15, we had 45 minutes of debate, followed immediately by a vote on the cloture petition. By a vote of 53 to 47, the Senate refused to cut off debate on the bill.

I do not think that 3 hours of debate is enough. This bill would fundamentally alter the Fair Labor Standards Act, a law that has been on the books for almost 60 years. Three hours of debate simply is not enough time for adequate discussion on changes in so basic a protection for the Nation's workers. This is not a filibuster, Mr. President. We simply want full and fair consideration of this fundamental change in labor standards.

My colleagues from Missouri and Kentucky also said this morning that the Fair Labor Standards Act forbids flexible work schedules for hourly employees. This, too, is false. If employers